United Nations CEDAW/C/SR.660

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
5 August 2004

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Thirty-first session

Summary record of the 660th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 16 July 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Açar

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Follow-up report to the fourth and fifth periodic reports of Argentina

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

04-42871 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Follow-up report to the fourth and fifth periodic reports of Argentina (CEDAW/C/ARG/5/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Argentina took places at the Committee table.*

2. **The Chairperson** noted that when the Committee had considered the fourth and fifth periodic reports of Argentina at its exceptional session in 2002, it had expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of information provided on the impact of the country's economic crisis on the female population. The Committee had consequently requested the State party to submit a follow-up report, taking into account the areas of concern under the Convention identified by the Committee and responding to its recommendations.

3. **Ms. Colombo** (Argentina), introducing her country's follow-up report (CEDAW/C/ARG/5/Add.1), said that the arrival of the current Argentine Government in May 2003 had signalled a new approach to the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country, as well to the issue of human rights. However, the effects of the policies implemented by previous Governments since the mid-1970s were still clearly visible in the crisis afflicting the country. As a result, Argentine society was marked, not only by increased poverty and unemployment, but also by considerable fragmentation and the loss of traditional and deep-rooted values. The poverty and unemployment rates had been reduced from the highs reached during the period 2000-2001, but much remained to be done. The Government was determined to restore social mobility and to promote active policies designed to facilitate the country's development and economic growth, generate jobs and achieve a fairer distribution of wealth. The State had a crucial role to play in renewing the commitment to the social inclusion of men and women and strengthening, preserving and assisting the family unit. She wished to stress the important role played by organized civil society in the planning and implementation of welfare, promotion and training programmes. The Government had introduced a broad programme for the institutional reform of the judiciary, and two of the three new members appointed to the Supreme Court by the national executive power were women.

4. The reconstruction of the country required a comprehensive programme aimed at achieving social inclusion and fighting poverty. One of the Government's key strategies was to ensure that men and women could exercise their right to obtain a decent job, support their families, educate their children and care for their elderly relatives. In the sphere of social development, government spending on social programmes had been increased, and the disjointed programmes of the past had been replaced by a federal network of social policies based on three core plans: the National Food Security Plan, the National Plan for Local Development and Social Economy and the Comprehensive Family and Community Plan. As a result of the reforms, the proportion of the social programmes budget going directly to beneficiaries had risen from the level of 40 per cent, or less, that had been common in previous years, to 95 per cent. The three plans had been introduced in June 2003. The various measures introduced under the three plans were described in the follow-up report before the Committee, and the delegation would be glad to discuss their impact on the lives of Argentine women. In particular, the reintroduction of collective-bargaining agreements would enable labour representatives to negotiate new conditions in the labour market, and the law now provided for women's participation in that process. Increased spending on social programmes had improved the impact of programmes such as the programme of benefits for mothers of seven or more children and the life-pension programme which, for the first time, covered every citizen over 70 years of age who lacked social security, most of whom were women.

5. The economic crisis had generated many new forms of social participation and organization, especially by women, who had used various strategies to keep their families together and to find ways to help and support each other. As a result, society — and women in particular — had become more aware of their rights and of the need to exercise them. The National Women's Council had reached institutional agreements with agencies of the national executive power and helped implement national policies, providing training and technical assistance to the provincial and municipal women's offices and to governmental and non-governmental organizations for

the promotion of rights, based on the principle of equality, in relation to paid and unpaid work, violence and health.

Institutional mechanisms and national machinery for the advancement of women

6. **Ms. González Martínez** said that she was concerned that the national machinery continued to diminish in terms of its importance and its budgetary resources. According to the State party's follow-up report (CEDAW/C/ARG/5/Add.1), the National Women's Council had in 2002 been attached to the National Council for Social Policy Coordination and had suffered budget cuts. The report also stated that the Senate had recently approved a bill to establish a new national machinery, which was before the Chamber of Deputies. The Committee felt that the Council was still losing political influence and would appreciate more information concerning the proposed machinery. She would appreciate more information about the international financing referred to in the report, and particularly about the plans to be funded, with respect to their objectives, content and impact. She would also be grateful for more information concerning the Programme to Strengthen the Family and Build Social Capital (PROFAM).

7. **Ms. Colombo** (Argentina) said that the aim of the National Council for Social Policy Coordination was to improve the use of resources and coordinate government actions. The National Women's Council had the rank of State Secretariat, and its membership of the National Council for Social Policy Coordination did not diminish its importance. The Council had existed for 12 years, and its members were well aware of the impact of the country's economic crisis. The plans to be funded through international financing — the Federal Plan for Women (PFM) and the Programme to Strengthen the Family and Build Social Capital (PROFAM) — had suffered due to the crisis and administrative problems, but the Council had been working together with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) to redefine some of the underlying concepts, and hoped to be granted a further two-year extension for their implementation. With respect to PROFAM, she said that the National Women's Council was working with organizations of civil society to strengthen the family, from a gender perspective. Over the past three months, training had been provided in an additional eight or nine provinces, and at the municipal level, to encourage involvement in programmes for women and to strengthen social capital.

Articles 5 and 10; violence against women

8. **Ms. Shin** said that, from her own country's experience, she could appreciate the difficulties facing the Government of Argentina in combating the economic crisis, and therefore understood the scope of efforts taken so far. However, the follow-up report was rather disappointing with respect to Argentina's efforts to eliminate violence against women. It was important for all concerned to understand the situation of women, since there was a tendency for such violence to escalate in times of severe economic crisis. There seemed to be no active policy for the investigation of cases arising from complaints of violence. She wondered whether there had so far been convictions, what punishment had been meted out to the perpetrators of violence and whether men were counselled or given any form of correctional treatment for the commission of such acts.

9. Similarly, there had been no information on the incidence of domestic violence or violence in society at large, regarding crimes such as rape, sexual assault or harassment in the workplace. She would also have liked to see more about the Government's approach to sexual exploitation of women and prostitution.

10. She asked how the Government planned to mainstream efforts to combat violence against women in its other social policies and programmes, and urged the delegation to provide additional information on efforts taken to alter the stereotypical attitudes about gender roles held by men and boys.

11. **Ms. Manalo** commended Argentina for its efforts in the field of education and, referring to table 8 on page 35 of the follow-up report (CEDAW/C/ARG/5/Add.1), asked for further information and sex-disaggregated statistics on the types of vocational and technical training offered, and the fields of study undertaken at the secondary and tertiary levels. Such data could be useful for illustrating the gender gap, as a preliminary step to eliminating gender stereotypes. Furthermore, social and economic recovery required the full participation of men and women in all sectors and at all levels.

12. Turning to the issue of sexual and reproductive health, she referred to National Act No. 25.673 on Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood, pointing

out that apparently not all entities, particularly the Ministry of Education, were inclined fully to implement the provisions of that law. If that was the case, how did the Government ensure that sex education was offered in school?

13. She asked whether Argentina had adopted a formal curriculum at all levels of the educational system focusing primarily on violence against women and domestic violence. In addition, she wished to know whether an assessment had been made of how well the proper attitudes were conveyed in the upbringing of boys, in order to steer them away from violence and aggression.

14. **Ms. Colombo** (Argentina), responding to questions raised under articles 5 and 10 and concerning violence against women, explained that the Government of Argentina was making progress in the formulation of laws at the provincial level to address the issues raised by the Committee. Each province had the competence to devise its own actions and general policy guidelines on the basis of provincial traditions and decisions. In the short term, national efforts were often not immediately reflected at the level of the province. Sensitive issues, such as violence against women, were relevant to all levels of society and generated different responses from the provincial and local governments and organizations of civil society. The Government was working towards the unification of efforts and the formulation of public policy for appropriate social behaviour. Poverty itself did not cause violence, but economic crisis could lead to an escalation of violence due to a deterioration of relationships. Since the 1970s, Argentina had experienced unprecedented decline in social standards which had precipitated a breakdown of family values. No scientific study had yet been undertaken by the Government, but she pointed out that the increase in sexual violence might be a reflection of the improved possibility of filing such complaints, together with the lowering of the ethical threshold among men. The Government would continue working for improvements in the area of the nuclear family unit, where values and behaviour were learned. It had renewed its commitment to create unified policies through efforts, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, to promote solid values, training and protocols of action for personnel in the security forces and health services, as well as other social workers. Another focus of the Government related to the care and treatment of victims of violence, and a training programme on the prevention of violence and victim care was planned.

15. In addition, efforts were being made to improve the registration of cases through better systems of data collection. The Government would endeavour to provide a body of more detailed statistics to the Committee in the future. In the area of trafficking, networks had been established with State organizations and civil society to enhance the Government's commitment to strengthening the justice system to provide adequate human rights protection. Another priority area for the Government was sensitization, and the need had been identified for such activities to be mainstreamed at the federal level.

16. She regretted not having more detailed information on gender stereotyping in education and acknowledged that, in some respects, Argentina was lagging in breaking stereotypes, in part because the Government had been trying to tackle a number of problems simultaneously. The Government recognized the need to ensure non-discrimination in education and was aware that the issue required ongoing attention, beyond the mere enactment of laws.

17. **Ms. di Tullio** (Argentina) said that, through the declaration of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), Argentina was mandated to elaborate a protocol of action to improve strategies to combat trafficking in women and children. Regular high-level meetings had been organized and a draft law to support the process was under way, in addition to plans for the establishment of a council against trafficking. Impunity had been one of the strongest areas of focus as the need to dismantle the criminal organization of trafficking had been widely recognized.

18. She was pleased to inform the Committee that successful mechanisms had been established for the application of a law on quotas, which would ensure a minimum of 33 per cent representation of women in the Chamber of Deputies. Since the 2003 elections, 41 per cent of senators in Argentina had been women. In that regard, the Government had pursued a sustained policy, and recent achievements had represented a real victory for women.

Articles 11, 12 and 14

19. **Ms. Khan** said that in spite of the signs of recovery reported by the delegation, and the fact that the number of households living in poverty had

declined, the data showed that the impact of poverty on female-headed households was still critical. Although a number of statistics had been supplied, it was difficult to establish a sense of consistency between the figures provided and the prevailing trends. She was therefore curious to know what special measures had been taken since the crisis to incorporate gender perspectives into the overall development policy. She noted that poverty affected women differently from men and that in addition to social isolation, women were exposed to physical and psychological threats and were therefore highly vulnerable. Poverty eradication measures should give women access to social safety nets as well as guarantee the protection of their human rights. Efforts should also be made in areas such as health and education to ensure women's participation in the process of recovery. It was clear that single women with children were in a particularly precarious position. According to figures by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) the numbers of single mothers had risen from 39 to 71 per cent between 1990 and 2003, and that trend had exacerbated the child labour situation.

20. **Ms. Patten** said that she was interested in learning more about the living standards of rural women, and in that connection, asked what budgetary allocations had been made for rural women in the Government's agricultural project. Referring to a project on rural women conducted by the National Women's Council, she asked whether the training of rural women under that project had been evaluated, and how many women had benefited from the projects. She would also like to know whether any other forms of assistance had been granted to those women, what the main obstacles were with respect to access to land and credit and what assistance had been given for the marketing of products. Had an agricultural survey been conducted on access to land ownership, or had any social policies been elaborated on rural women? With reference to a national symposium and concrete measures taken in the area of education, she asked what priority had been given to the other conclusions of that symposium, particularly with regard to health, environment, access to land and other issues raised. She was particularly interested in knowing the level at which decisions had been taken, and how many women from rural areas had been involved. She asked for details of rural school repair and construction programmes and asked how many schools were to be built or repaired, how many of those were girl's schools, what time frame was envisaged and the size of the budget allocated for construction.

21. She believed the figures presented on maternal mortality were rather high and was therefore curious to have further information on the access of rural women to comprehensive health services. In conclusion she wished to highlight the devastating impact the criminalization of abortion had had on rural women and asked the delegation whether the Government envisaged a review of the abortion law.

22. **Ms. González Martínez** said she had the impression that the health-care programme had been applied unevenly, and that in some areas weaknesses prevailed. She would appreciate the delegation's comments on the implementation of the Government's health-care policy, in particular concerning what impact health care had had on women in vulnerable situations, particularly those living in remote areas, and how the Government planned to strengthen implementation. Considering the alarmingly high incidence of sexually transmitted disease, which had doubled between 1998 and 2002, she asked how the Government planned to tackle that problem and what had been achieved in its strategy on HIV/AIDS prevention. She was also particularly concerned by the issue of teenage pregnancy and maternal morbidity and mortality, especially given the fact that, in certain respects, taboos were attached to sex education and the delivery of contraception. She asked what practical and administrative measures had been taken or were planned to remedy that situation and to what extent the Government would pursue public information campaigns on sex education for young persons and children. She looked forward to Argentina's next report, which she hoped would provide more detailed information on corrective measures taken and results achieved.

23. **Ms. Ferrer Gómez** asked to what extent the Government had integrated the gender perspective into national policies and programmes like the National Food Security Plan (report, p. 5), the National Plan for Local Development and Social Economy (the "Let's Get to Work" Plan) (report, p. 10) and the Family Plan (report, p. 7), and had tried to promote the access of women to more lucrative employment. The report (p. 10) indicated that the Government was planning to modify the Programme for Unemployed Heads of Household, the majority of whom were women: one change could be to tailor the benefits to the number of

children in each family. Something should also be done about the fact that more than half of salaried women received either no social benefits or partial benefits, and that many elderly women retired without any pension or on minimum pensions. Special support and incentives should be given to the women participating in the "Let's Get to Work" Plan. More information would be useful on what was being done to eliminate the huge wage gap between women and men doing the same work; on the progress achieved in the programmes for equal opportunity and equal treatment in the workplace; and on the tax system, which apparently imposed a greater burden on women than on men.

24. **Ms. Colombo** (Argentina) said that even where a gender component was not explicit in policies and programmes, the Government, in formulating and applying them, did not view women simply as beneficiaries of social assistance but worked to make them wage earners, while recognizing the value of household work in itself and the need to have men bear a fairer share of it. The Government always sought to promote paid work. The Programme for Unemployed Heads of Household, for instance, allowed beneficiaries to draw benefits while earning for up to six months.

25. The recently initiated National Food Security Plan, with a budget of 470 million pesos, had made a significant improvement in the situation, through food kitchens and school lunches directly, and by encouraging individual self-sufficiency in food production and providing nutritional care for pregnant women and infants.

26. The social indicators for poverty in Argentina needed to be refined. There was no indicator that quantified benefits other than income, such as the free drug plan provided in over 6,000 health centres throughout the country, or the free education grants to poor children, all of which were an enormous help to poor families.

27. The Government was already giving thought to tailoring the benefits under the Programme for Unemployed Heads of Household to the size of the families, but the main thrust of the National Plan for Local Development and Social Economy was to move families from welfare to work and self-sufficiency. The Family Plan, which covered about 250,000 families in the various provinces, took many approaches — promoting exercise of rights, offering training for entry into the labour force and support for schooling — and its chief objective was not only to provide every family with basic income but to enable it to raise its standard of living.

28. The National Women's Council had initially set up the National Women, Equity and Work Programme (report, p. 12) as a job training programme and a particularly solid and innovative entrepreneurship training programme for women. It had recently expanded it by including technical teams from the Let's Get to Work Plan to work with the provincial women's offices and non-governmental organizations to monitor the impact of the training. By the end of 2004, that expanded programme would be established in six regions.

29. A recent improvement in the area of employment had been the establishment of the single family allowance system, under which State-financed allowances were no longer paid by the employers but directly by the Ministry of Labour to the women or men concerned, thus eliminating the possibility of restrictions or fraud. Another Ministry of Labour policy that would greatly benefit women was the regularization of the black economy through the empowerment of inspectors to impose penalties on employers for not reporting employees and failing to pay social security and pension benefits for them. The Ministry was now better able to keep a record of the actual size of the labour force.

30. Similarly, the recent establishment of the Social Land Bank would allow the Government to make an overall assessment of the available land. For the last century, the Government had been considering ways of giving title to squatters on public land, but the Bank would now give the Government the resources to implement a comprehensive settlement policy for settlements that did not offer decent living conditions.

31. There were a great many government initiatives specifically targeted at the 5 million rural women in the country. The National Women's Council, under its National Women, Equity and Work Programme, was cooperating with the national rural worker's union and the trade union's women's network (report, para. 13) in a whole range of approaches to improve their lot.

32. Buenos Aires had enacted municipal legislation to attempt to quantify the contribution of unremunerated women's work to the national wealth,

on the basis of a study done in cooperation with a non-governmental organization, and the Government was trying to extend such research to other parts of the country.

33. The figures requested by Ms. Patten would be supplied at a later date.

34. **Ms. Palomeque** (Argentina) said that the National Bank of Argentina had established a $3.5 million National Fund for the creation of microenterprises (report, p. 13), at the urging of non-governmental organizations. Thus far, it had helped start up 650 individual or cooperative microenterprises with guaranteed 7 per cent loans of from 3,000 to 30,000 pesos, thus allowing the beneficiaries to move from the informal economy, 40 per cent of which comprised women, to the formal economy, and in the process contributing to local development.

35. **Ms. Colombo** (Argentina) said that the National Programme for Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood (report, p. 16) administered jointly by the National Women's Council and the Ministry of Health, provided access to reproductive health services and allowed women to exercise their reproductive rights. National resources were transmitted to the provinces for programme implementation. In addition, a childbirth bill had been drafted establishing standards for the medical professionals involved and involving the husbands as well, to allow women to give birth in a more caring environment.

36. **Ms. di Tullio** (Argentina) explained that the law establishing the National Programme for Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood was relatively recent, and its effects had not yet been evaluated. Moreover, the provinces enjoyed autonomy in their implementation of the law. The National Women's Council was responsible for monitoring its effects nationwide, with the assistance of many women's non-governmental organizations. The health ministries of the MERCOSUR countries had recently issued a joint declaration, the text of which would be made available to the Committee. It contained an undertaking to pursue efforts to ensure that reproductive and sexual health services were made universally accessible, especially to adolescents and young people, on a basis of informed consent and guaranteed privacy. Efforts to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity would be redoubled, and the emphasis placed on safe childbirth, high-quality obstetric care and access to abortion where the law allowed for such services. Efforts would also be made to eliminate violence against women, especially sexual violence. Those policy commitments were being maintained by Argentina in all international forums.

37. **Ms. Colombo** (Argentina) said that the Government's policy was to prevent abortion by ensuring that families had access to high-quality family planning services and were able to decide whether to have children or not. There were no current plans to amend the existing legislation.

38. **Ms. Puga Marin** (Argentina) said that in line with the national health plan, contraceptives, including the contraceptive pill, were available at all health centres, and were dispensed in sufficient quantities to meet demand. Over 1 million intrauterine devices had also been made available. Where doctors were unwilling for religious reasons to prescribe contraception, patients were referred elsewhere. HIV/AIDS had reached crisis proportions in Argentina, and was increasingly prevalent among women and young people, in spite of public information campaigns. The situation was aggravated by the country's economic crisis, because many of its institutions were still incapable of functioning normally. However, it was receiving assistance in combating the disease from UNAIDS and the Global Fund and from non-governmental organizations, and a great deal of work was being done by multidisciplinary teams operating country-wide. It was hotly debated whether cultural attitudes and practices contributed to the problem of HIV/AIDS.

39. As for health services for older women, 3.5 million people, of whom half were women, were covered by pensioners' health schemes which provided coverage for all health services, including specialist services. Coverage was automatically provided for persons over the age of 70. The national insurance network covered virtually 100 per cent of the population. Local health committees and multidisciplinary teams working at local level took responsibility for the distribution of medicines. As the country was only now emerging from an unprecedented economic crisis, considerable political will was needed to keep up the necessary levels of health care.

40. **Ms. Khan** asked whether the federal plan for women covered all the provinces. What proportion of the "Let's Get to Work" programme measures targeted

women, and were those measures carried out in all the provinces? Were the loans provided under the credit facility offered free of collateral? In the context of the economic crisis, had any gender analysis taken place of the budgetary measures adopted? Was the gender aspect incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals for Argentina?

41. **Mr. Flinterman** said he was glad to note the Government's commitment to human rights and the progress made in overhauling the judicial apparatus. The protection of human rights had to begin at the domestic level, but international recourse procedures were also important. In view of that, he wondered when Argentina would ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

42. **Ms. Gabr** expressed concern about the 20 per cent increase in breast cancer among women. What measures were planned to combat cancer, especially breast cancer? Were women adequately informed about the protection available to them in the event of domestic violence, and did that protection include free legal advice? She also wondered what progress had been reached with the draft law on child protection.

43. **Ms. Ferrer Gomez** suggested that, in its next report, the Government should provide disaggregated data for the provinces of Argentina, since conditions varied considerably from one province to another and it was not clear how policies were implemented across the country.

44. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** asked whether there was any comprehensive national plan of action to combat gender violence, as recommended by the various treaty bodies, to include measures to protect victims and punish offenders. Gender violence was not a private matter, but a violation of fundamental human rights.

45. **Ms. Patten** was concerned about the rising trend in breast and cervical cancers, and asked whether women in rural areas had adequate access to medical services. Did the data in the follow-up report include rural areas, and were young women in rural areas covered by the measures to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS?

46. **Ms. González Martínez** mentioned the issue of voluntary sterilization: was it available as a method of birth control? In its next report, she hoped the Government would deal with the question of access for adolescents to reproductive health services on a confidential basis, without having to be accompanied to medical appointments by an adult.

47. **Ms. Colombo** (Argentina), replying to questions by members of the Committee, said that the federal plan for women, with its 100 special programmes, was intended mainly to put in place mechanisms to tackle women's problems throughout the country and to address poverty. It aimed to improve social capital by protecting families, and, through the "Let's Get to Work" programme, sought to help women enter the labour market, as a crucial means of escaping poverty. It also sought to prevent violence against women and pregnancies among adolescents. The Millennium Development Goals, as implemented in Argentina, incorporated a gender perspective by seeking to involve women and men equally in decision-making. The Government's health policies and the LUSIDA project ensured, among other things, that pregnant women could obtain testing for HIV/AIDS. Women who were victims of violence could obtain free legal advice; in Buenos Aires, there was also a telephone advice line. Similar arrangements existed in other parts of the country. The National Women's Council was providing training at provincial level for women to make official complaints of violence, and was expecting to receive adequate budget funds for that part of its programmes. She undertook to ensure that the next report provided data disaggregated by province and region, as requested. The national statistical office carried out statistical surveys twice a year for the whole country, but the data were not necessarily broken down in the manner requested. Since 2003, a train had been going to different parts of the country, carrying multidisciplinary teams of workers from the social services and from the Ministries of Health and Labour, to bring certain services, among them specialist services such as mammograms, to the provinces; such a train was presently in Patagonia. National Act No. 25.673, establishing the National Programme for Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood, did provide for adolescents from the age of 14 to obtain medical advice on a confidential basis and without being accompanied by an adult. Dialogue between adults and adolescents was important in preventing pregnancy among young girls. Voluntary sterilization was under discussion in the National Women's Council. No position had yet been adopted on the issue, although it was felt that the law should provide for access to all contraceptive methods which were not abortifacient or

irreversible, on the basis of free consent and in the light of patients' needs. As for the question of accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention, the Convention itself was already part of the national Constitution, and the Government was in favour of accession to the Protocol. The matter was currently under discussion in the Senate.

48. **Mr. Mayoral** (Argentina) said that its work with the Committee, which was defending one of the most vulnerable groups in the country, had helped his Government as it sought to overcome the current crisis. He assured members that any statistics not provided would be submitted subsequently.

49. **The Chairperson** commended Argentina for consolidating a democratic society while coping with enormous difficulties. The Committee was urging it to adopt policies that would remove a disproportionate burden from women during the current crisis in the country and give them greater equality with men, and the national machinery for women, while excellent, was not sufficiently empowered and funded. The next periodic report should give fuller information on the actual impact of programmes.

50. Violence against women, which always escalated in times of crisis, had to be attacked through consciousness raising and education, especially of men, to ensure that women were not doubly victimized. In responding to the continuing crisis, the Government must place special emphasis on gender in all its policies, plans and budgets, in order to send the right message to the society.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.